



United States
Office of Personnel Management

FWS Job Grading Standard for Film Assembler-Stripper

4405

TS-45, 10/81

**Workforce Compensation and Performance Service
Classification Programs Division
June 1998, HRCD-5**

WORK COVERED

This standard is used to grade nonsupervisory work involved in the assembly, stripping, opaquing, and splicing of photographic negatives and positives for partial, single, composite, and multiple flat layouts with one or more units up which are used in subsequent offset platemaking processes to produce a variety of printed material. Such work requires a practical understanding of the relationship between film assembly-stripping and other offset reproduction processes.

WORK NOT COVERED

The following kinds of work are not covered by this standard:

- Intricate corrections and revisions of film and plastic negatives by means of drawing and engraving tools, e.g., pens, brushes, and etching needles. (See [Negative Engraving, 4413.](#))

TITLES

Jobs graded by this standard are to be titled *Film Assembler-Stripper*.

GRADE LEVELS

This standard describes three levels of nonsupervisory film assembly-stripping work (grades 5, 7, and 8). Depending on the nature of the work performed, any one of these grade levels may represent the highest nonsupervisory level or full performance level of film assembly-stripping work found in a particular work situation or printing facility.

However, this standard does not describe all possible grades at which jobs may be established in this occupation, or in any way limit the authority of agencies to assign work or particular duties to positions. If jobs differ substantially from the levels of skill, knowledge, and other work requirements of the grade described in this standard, they may warrant grading either above or below these grades, based on the application of sound job grading principles.

NOTE TO USERS

The full performance level for film assembler-strippers as described in this standard is usually grade 8; however, in some situations the full performance level of work may meet the grade 7 level described in this standard and not the grade 8. Likewise, there may be some unusual situations in which the full performance level does not exceed the grade 5 as described in this standard.

Positions involving film assembly-stripping duties performed in conjunction with regular and recurring duties performed in another occupation should be titled, coded, and graded in accordance with the "Mixed-Job" Policy described in [Part I, Explanation of the Job Grading System, Grading Trades and Labor Jobs](#).

4405-5**FILM ASSEMBLER-STRIPPER, GRADE 5****4405-5**

General: The grade 5 film assembler-stripper follows established procedures to layout line and/or halftone negatives and positives in proper alignment to prelined or unlined masking paper to compose single flats which are subsequently used to produce offset printing plates. The flats produced at this level usually contain one or two units up. The individual at this grade level opaques or tapes pin holes and scratches on the acetate side of the film; measures and trims negatives to a workable size; selects masking sheets; rules and marks layout (i.e., margins, trim marks, and other reference lines) according to detailed instructions to insure the proper positioning of the film within the specified dimensions on the masking paper.

The work performed at this level is covered by specific and easily understood instructions.

Skill and Knowledge: The grade 5 film assembler-stripper must have a basic knowledge of the techniques and procedures required to layout reproduction film and composite negatives or positives to compose single flats. In addition, the film assembler-stripper at this level must have a basic understanding of press capabilities (e.g., plate and paper gripper margins vary according to press sizes), subsequent bindery operations, and their relationship to film assembly and stripping work. The grade 5 film assembler-stripper applies basic skill and knowledge in the layout and lining in of basic dimensions such as trim marks, gripper margins, centerlines, and other reference lines on the masking sheet to assure correct positioning of the reproduction film within specified dimensions on the masking sheet. The film assembler-stripper applies basic skill to accurately line up the image on the film to reference lines on the masking sheet and cut out exposure openings (i.e., cut aways or windows) in the masking sheet for the image areas on the film. In addition, the grade 5 film assembler-stripper is skilled in making minor corrections to negatives by retouching pinholes, scratches, or unwanted detail with opaquing fluid and a brush.

Work at this grade level requires a practical knowledge of standard agency operating procedures and accepted trade practices. In addition, the film assembler-stripper must have basic skills in the use of such tools and equipments as layout and line up tables, T-squares, knives, razor blades, tape, scissors, etching needles, brushes, masking materials, and measuring instruments such as graduated straightedges, triangles, and rulers.

A basic knowledge of arithmetic (i.e., addition and multiplication of fractions) is necessary at this level to calculate layout measurements for flats. These measurements are necessary to determine the proper positioning of the film image to the masking sheet.

Responsibility: A higher graded film assembler-stripper or supervisor assigns work orally or through written work orders. Instructions are detailed and complete. The worker selects the proper size masking sheet according to the size press the job will be run on and is responsible for the layout of film negatives and positives, margins and trim marks, according to the image position required in the work order. The grade 5 is also responsible for cutting out exposure

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openings in the masking sheet and opaquing minor imperfections in the negative such as pin holes and/or scratches. In addition, the grade 5 film assembler-stripper is responsible for marking flats with full identification to guard against separation from the job. Work at this level is not normally reviewed in process; however, completed work is reviewed to assure that it meets work specifications and accepted trade standards.

Physical Effort: The work requires standing, sitting, bending, and reaching for long periods of time; good eye-hand coordination; and lifting and carrying copy material and supplies weighing up to 9 kilograms (20 pounds).

Working Conditions: Work is performed indoors under subdued lighting, in a well-ventilated area. There is a possibility of cuts to fingers from knives, razor blades, etching tools, and film. Some jobs may be located in noisy pressrooms or bindery equipment areas. Film assembler-strippers may be exposed to fumes from cleaning solvents used in layout operations. In addition, they are subject to eye strain and/or fatigue resulting from light shining through the glass top of the layout table.

4405-7**FILM ASSEMBLER-STRIPPER, GRADE 7****4405-7**

General: The grade 7 film assembler-stripper plans, assembles, lays out, and strips into place film negatives and positives to compose single, partial (e.g., step and repeat or step up), composite (e.g., double printing or surprinting) and multiple unit flats which do not require book work impositions (i.e., sheetwise, work-and-turn or work-and-tumble impositions for signature layouts where the pages (units) must be arranged in a specific order so that they can be backed-up properly and will fold in sequence). The flats are used to produce offset plates for subsequent printing operations for singlecolor, two-color, and multiple color work. The film assembler-stripper at this grade level selects the type of masking sheet, lays out and rules masking sheets as specified in the work order, measures negatives for proper size, and trims film to workable proportions. Also, the grade 7 strips (combines) line and halftone negatives into one sheet of film; crops halftones; and adds trim, registration, and fold marks.

In comparison to the grade 5 film assembler-stripper, the grade 7 must have a working knowledge of the trade in the planning and layout for single, partial, multiple unit, and composite flats, as well as determining the proper procedure and techniques to be used. The grade 7 is skilled in stripping in line and halftone work on the same piece of reproduction film. In addition to laying out and stripping for single, partial, and multiple unit flats, the grade 7 film assembler-stripper must be able to strip in registration marks and tabs to maintain alignment on composite flats which range from closeup to and including hairline tolerances.

Skill and Knowledge: In comparison to the grade 5 film assembler-stripper who has a basic knowledge of assembly and stripping techniques and procedures and works on single flats, the grade 7 film assembler-stripper has a working knowledge of the techniques and procedures required to plan, assemble, lay out, and strip into place film negatives and positives with close and hairline alignment tolerances to compose partial, single composite, and multiple unit flats not requiring bookwise impositions. The film assembler-stripper at this level must have a practical understanding of press capabilities and subsequent bindery operations to allow for correct gripper margins according to press sizes, as well as correct layout according to subsequent bindery operations.

The grade 7 film assembler-stripper is skilled in the techniques and procedures required in the assembly, layout, and strip in of reproduction film negatives and positives to produce single, partial, composite, and multiple unit flats. The film assembler-stripper provides for proper margins during layout by considering sheet and gripper size, trim and fold marks, and bleeding images, and type of bind (e.g., loose leaf) as specified in the work order. In addition, the film assembler-stripper at the 7 level is skilled in making corrections to negatives by retouching (e.g., opaquing pinholes, scratches, and unwanted detail) and splicing out obsolete or damaged portions of negatives.

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Film assembler-strippers at this grade level are skilled in the use of layout and negative correction equipment and tools such as layout and lineup or register tables, knives, razors, scissors, etching pens, film register marks, register pins and tabs, masking materials, and measuring instruments such as graduated straightedges, triangles, rulers, and master templates.

Responsibility: The grade 7 film assembler-stripper works from work orders, layout diagrams (dummies), drawings, and/or oral or written instructions from a supervisor or a designated higher graded employee. The grade 7 plans and completes routine and repetitive work independently using knowledge of general layout diagrams and trade practices. The grade 7 has responsibility for the correct imposition, and sequence of image materials; close and hairline alignment tolerances of flats for "surprinting" or "double burns"; and correct selection of screen tints, as well as the necessary identification of flats as to sequence, color, and job code. The employee at this grade level is responsible for selecting the correct size and kind of mask required for the work, ruling to specification, stripping film to exact location, and deciding the extent of negative retouching required. In addition, the grade 7 is responsible for precise measurements in laying out multiple unit flats with proper allowances for margins and bleeding images. The work is accomplished with little or no in-progress review. Completed work is reviewed to insure compliance with specifications and trade standards.

Physical Effort: The physical effort at this grade level is similar to that described at the [grade 5 level](#).

Working Conditions: The working conditions are similar to those described at the [grade 5 level](#).

4405-8**FILM ASSEMBLER-STRIPPER, GRADE 8****4405-8**

General: The grade 8 film assemble-stripper, similar to the grade 7 level, plans, assembles, lays out, and strips into place film negatives and positives to compose single, composite, partial (step and repeat), and multiple unit flats. However, in addition, the grade 8 film assembler-stripper composes multiple unit flats in bookwork impositions for signature layouts (i.e., multiple unit flats where the pages (units) must be arranged in a specific order so that they can be backed-up and will fold in sequence and accurately compiles multiple flats atop one another to maintain hairline (i.e., plus or minus .003 inches) through critical (i.e., plus or minus .001 inches or finer) alignment tolerances for subsequent platemaking and press operations. The work requires that separate flats containing details for each color be compiled within alignment tolerances.

For example, in most types of multicolor printing, as in the case of map and chart work, there are at least two, and sometimes as many as eight, separate film flats containing details to print in the same color. Typically there are four separate film flats containing details that will print in black: the culture, names, grid, and marginal data. These film flats must be compiled accurately to insure perfect alignment during the subsequent platemaking operations in order to produce one black press plate. Likewise, all of the separate flats containing details to print in each of the other colors are combined according to their respective colors. Each flat must be registered, not only to other flats of the same color, but also to all the other flats making up the other colors on the map, chart, or illustration.

In comparison to the grade 7 film assembler-stripper, the grade 8 must have a broad knowledge of the procedures and techniques required to compile signature and multiple flats within hairline (i.e., plus or minus .003 inches) and critical (i.e., plus or minus .001 inches or finer) alignment tolerances. In addition, the grade 8 retouches and corrects film negatives such as etching broken or plugged lines and letters. The grade 8 may on occasion, perform minor corrections on plugged halftones and/or screened negatives.

Skill and Knowledge: In comparison with the grade 7 film assembler-stripper who is concerned with single, partial, and composite flats with multiple units up, the grade 8 film assembler-stripper must have a broad and comprehensive knowledge of the procedures and technique required to plan, assemble, layout and strip into place film negatives and positives to compose multiple unit (signature flats) and multiple flats in hairline and critical tolerances for multiple color printing. The flats prepared at this level may be similar to those prepared at the grade 7 level in terms of the type of flats (i.e., partial or composite), and layouts. However, the work at the grade 7 level, for example, does not involve bookwise imposition for signature flats, allowance for creep during layout of signatures to be saddle stitched or superimposing multiple flats atop one another to maintain hairline and critical alignment tolerances for critical multicolor printing. In addition, critical tolerance work requires a practical knowledge of the dimensional stability requirements of film flats and masking materials as well as the alignment sequence for different detail flats (e.g., culture, names and grid) within each color. Film assembler-strippers at this level are skilled in the full range of techniques and procedures

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employed in the film assembly-stripping and registration of negative and positives for partial, single composite, multiple unit, and multiple flat work required for single-color and multicolor printing. The grade 8 exercises skill in maintaining accuracy of alignment of each flat in multiple flat work, so that the flats maintain their precise relationship to each other, either on one press plate or on several plates printing on the same sheet of paper in multicolor printing. The grade 8 is skilled in correcting existing negatives by etching in broken or plugged lines and letters and may perform minor corrections on plugged screen and halftone negatives, as well as negative corrections performed at lower levels.

In addition to the equipment described at the lower levels, the grade 8 film assembler-stripper is skilled in the use of pin register bars and punches and small sighting tubes or collimating magnifiers to avoid register errors.

Responsibility: While the grade 8 film assembler-stripper has essentially the same responsibility requirements as the grade 7 for determining things such as the best layout, imposition and stripping techniques and procedures for partial, single, and multiple unit flats, the grade 8 also has responsibility for establishing hairline and critical registration tolerances and accuracy of multiple flat work used in single and multicolor printing. The work is accomplished with no in-progress review. The completed product is spot checked to see that the work meets requirements and accepted trade standards. The supervisor is called on for advice on unusual problems or on the basis of problems appearing in subsequent press or bindery processes.

Physical Effort: The physical effort at this grade level is similar to that described at the [grade 5 level](#).

Working Conditions: The working conditions at this grade are the same as those at the [grade 5 level](#).